

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00 MBFR-03

SAJ-01 DODE-00 H-02 NSC-10 SS-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 RSR-01

/137 W

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R 151537 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7818

INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USNMR SHAPE

USLOSACLANT

USCINCEUR

USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 3307

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: BELGIAN ATTITUDES

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SUMMARY. BELGIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS MBFR, AS MADE MANIFEST BY SUCH BEHAVIOR AS REFUSAL TO ATTEND AD HOC GROUP MEETINGS, SEEM TO HAVE BEEN BASED, AT FIRST, ON SKEPTICISM OVER POSSIBILITY GET MBFR TALKS UNDERWAY, THEN FOLLOWED BY CONTINUING UNEASINESS OVER US- SOVIET BILATERAL NEGOTIATION AND THE THREAT TO BELGIAN SECURITY POSED BY THE WITHDRAWAL OF US FORCES UNDER ALMOST ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. BELGIAN MOVES, SOMETIMES ERRATIC, WITHIN THIS GENERALLY HYPER- CAUTIOUS APPROACH CAN PERHAPS BE EXPLAINED BY ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONALITY FACTORS IN THE BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND BY THE DETERMINATION OF KEY OFFICIALS NOT TO TAKE A QUIET BACK SEAT EITHER TO THE LARGER EUROPEAN POWERS OR TO THE SUPER- POWERS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE BELGIANS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY SKEPTICAL OVER MBFR, AS WE HAVE NOTED DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF ALLIANCE DISCUSSIONS OF THE SUBJECT. FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER HARMEL'S VIEW WAS LUKEWARM. THIS NEGATIVE ATTITUDE LED THE BELGIANS TO PLEAD FOR THE INCLUSION OF A HIGHER DEGREE OF MILITARY SECURITY CONTENT IN ALLIED PREPARATIONS FOR THE CSCE. THE BELGIANS SAW MILITARY SECURITY AS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF CSCE AND BELIEVED THAT IT COULD NOT BE ABANDONED TO THE UNCERTAIN FORUM OF MBFR.

3. INITIAL BELGIUM SKEPTICISM OVER THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN ACTUAL LAUNCHING OF MBFR ALMOST EVAPORATED WITH THE INITIATION OF MIT IN VIENNA. BELGIAN TACTICS NOW APPEAR TO BE CONDITIONED BY FACTORS RELATED TO HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE AND TO BELGIUM'S POSITION AS ONE OF THE SMALL POWERS OF EUROPE. HAVING TURNED FROM TRADITIONAL NEUTRALITY TO SECURITY BASED ON MEMBERSHIP IN A MILITARY ALLIANCE, BELGIUM HAS LONG COUNTED HEAVILY ON THE UNITED STATES AS ITS BASIC NATIONAL SECURITY GUARANTEE. MBFR, WHILE AIMED AT FORCE REDUCTIONS WHICH WOULD NOT CHANGE THE STRATEGIC BALANCE IN EUROPE, NONETHELESS RAISES FOR BELGIUM THE DISQUIETING SPECTER OF THE REDUCTION OF AT LEAST SOME OF THE COMFORTING US MILITARY PRESENCE. BELGIUM HAS BOUGHT THE ALLIANCE POSITION ON THE DESIRABILITY OF MBFR BUT HAS NOT ALTOGETHER QUELLED HER FEARS THAT IT MAY NOT WORK TO HER OWN LONG TERM ADVANTAGE: NOTHING TO BE GAINED, AND POSSIBLY SOMETHING TO BE LOST. THIS OUTLOOK LEADS TO THE TENDENCY TO GET OUT IN FRONT OF THE ALLIED CONSENSUS WITH HARD- NOSED POSITIONS, E. G. HUN-  
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GARIAN PARTICIPATION AND CSCE/ MBFR DATE LINKAGE.

4. WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS BELGIAN ATTITUDE CERTAIN PERSONALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES ARE AT WORK WHICH MAY ACCOUNT FOR OCCASIONALLY ERRATIC AND UNEXPECTED BEHAVIOR IN VIENNA AND NATO. THE CONDUCT OF BELGIUM'S EAST/ WEST RELATIONS HAS, WE HAVE NOTED, BEEN SOMEWHAT CONFUSED SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF ANDRE FORTHOMME

FOR MOSCOW LAST FALL. A SKILLED DIPLOMAT, FORTHOMME OPERATED JUST BELOW THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL DIRECTOR DAVIGNON, WHOSE FULL CONFIDENCE HE ENJOYED, WITH HIS CAPABLE FINGER ON ALMOST ALL MATTERS EAST/ WEST, INCLUDING CSCE AND-- ALBEIT TO A LESSER EXTENT-- MBFR. HIS REPLACEMENT HAS APPARENTLY NOT ASSUMED THIS DIRECTING AND COORDINATING ROLE. WITH FORTHOMME GONE, EVEN SEEMINGLY MINOR DECISIONS MUST AWAIT THE PERSONAL APPROVAL OF DAVIGNON, A FORCEFUL AUTHORITARIAN WHO DOES NOT ALWAYS HAVE TIME THOROUGHLY TO DIGEST HIS DOSSIER BEFORE SENDING INSTRUCTIONS. DAVIGNON IS VERY CLEVER AND INDUSTRIOUS, HBUT HE IS SPREAD TOO THIN.

5. WE AGREE WITH THE COMMENT IN VIENNA 4822 THAT THE UNDERLYING BELGIAN MOTIVATION IS LARGELY A NATIONAL STATUS ISSUE. AS A SMALL COUNTRY, BELGIUM CAN ONLY PROTECT ITS INTERESTS AND PLAY AN AUDIBLE ROLE ON THE EUROPEAN STAGE AS A MEMBER OF NATO AND OF THE EC NINE, AND IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT BELGIUM' S VIEWS ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THOSE OF ALL THE SMALL NATO COUNTRIES IN THIS RESPECT. BELGIUM, LIKE OTHER SMALL POWERS, IS UNEASY OVER SUPER-POWER BILATERALISM, BECAUSE IT IS SEEN AS DETRACTING FROM THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ALLIANCE.

6. WE APPRECIATE THE AMOUNT OF TIME AND EFFORT WHICH HAS BEEN DEVOTED BY OUS OFFICIALS IN VIENNA AND AT NATO TO MAKING THE SMALL PARTNERS FEEL THAT THEIR VIEWS ARE BEING SOUGHT AND THEIR INTERESTS APPROPRIATELY CONSIDERED. WE SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF TREATING THE SMALLER ALLIES AS EQUAL PARTNERS NOT ONLY AS AT PRESENT IN VIENNA AND IN THE NATO COUNCIL BUT ALSO IN WASHINGTON AND THE CAPITALS AS WELL. STRAUZ- HUPE

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\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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**To:** ANKARA  
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BONN  
EUR  
NATO BRUSSELS  
ROME  
SECSTATE WASHDC

THE HAGUE

VIENNA

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